Post-Matric Scholarships to SC/ST Students

*303. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to increase the rate of post-matric scholarships to assist the SC and ST students; and

(b) if so, whether Government would share 50 per cent of expenditure as a welfare measure of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students?;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Under the centrally Sponsored Scheme of Post Matric Scholarship for students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes the rates of Scholarship were revised with efffect from 01.10.1995.

(b) Government of India provides 100% Central Assistance to concerned State Governments and Union Territory Administrations over and above their committed liability. However, the requirement of committed liability has been dispensed with in case of North-Eastern States.

डा० वाई० लक्ष्मी प्रसाद: सभापति महोदय, मेरा प्रश्न है कि क्या सरकार अनुसूचित जाति/अनुसचित जनजाति के विद्यार्थियों की सहायता हेतु मैट्रिक पश्चात् छात्रवृत्तियों की राशि में वृद्धि करने का विचार रखती है? मैंने यह सवाल पूछा है। लेकिन मंत्री जी ने उत्तर में 1995 की बात बताई है। छात्रवृत्ति की राशि में 1995 में संशोधन हुआ है। मेरा प्रश्न है कि आप उनको 1995 से पहले क्या छात्रवृत्ति देते थे, संशोधन के बाद क्या छात्रवृत्ति देते हैं? इसमें कितने प्रतिशत की बढ़ोत्तरी की गई है? यह मैं आपसे जानना चाहता हू।

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Sir, as far as I understand, the question is "What has been done after 1995 for the modification of this scheme?" Is that correct? The following modifications have been made in this scheme. After 1.4.1999, that is, after I assumed charge, the income-ceiling limit of parents and guardians has been raised. There have been a lot of restrictive clauses. They have been removed. For example, prior to this only two male children of the same parents were eligible to get the benefit under this scheme. There was no restriction in regard to female children. In the modified

scheme, the restrictive clause has been removed totally. Now, all children of the same parents are eligible to get benefits under this scheme. Secondly, the committed liability of the North-Eastern States has been removed. Now we give them as much money as they ask for. Thirdly, we have added that SC and ST students will be given special preference, so far as disabilities are concerned. Then, we are going in for further modifications also. The States and UTs have suggested that we should enhance the existing maintenance allowance. We should re-group the courses to include new professional courses in order to provide more benefits. We put the income ceiling. We have revised it further, over and above the increase under the existing system of revision of income ceiling. We have revised other admissible allowances. We are looking into all these things.

डा० वाई० लक्ष्मी प्रसादः सभापति महोदय, मेरा प्रश्न सीधा है कि 1995 के बाद स्कालरशिप की दरों में कितने प्रतिशत की बढ़ोत्तरी हुई है?

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Sir, I have answered that. I have said that it was raised in 1995. After that it has not been raised. We are now looking into it in order to make it more practical. In fact, when we had a conference of SCs and STs, everybody asked for it. We are seriously looking into it to bring it on part with the ...*(Interruptions)* expenses now.

डा० वाई० लक्ष्मी प्रसादः सर, वचनबद्ध-देयता की आवश्यकता पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों के लिए समाप्त कर दी गई है। हमारे आंध्र में अनुसूचित जाति के लिए 142 स्कूल हैं और अनुसूचित जनजाति के लिए 70 स्कूल हैं। हमारे आंध्र प्रदेश का जो वचनबद्धता देय है वह कब तक दिया जाएगा? इसे देने में क्या दिक्कत है? यह मैं आपसे जानना चाहता हूं।

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Sir, can he repeat his question please? I could not understand it. Today I am not feeling well also.

DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: The requirement of committed liability has been paid in the case of North-Eastern States. I would like to know from you जो आंध्र प्रदेश में 142 शैड्यूल्ड कास्ट के लिए स्कूल हैं और 70 शैड्यूल्ड ट्राइब्स के लिए स्कूल हैं। मेरा प्रश्न है कि आंध्र प्रदेश के लिए जो अमाउंट आपको भेजना है वह आप कब तक भेजेंगी?

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Sir, I do not think there is any specific problem for Andhra Pradesh. This year, we are sending Rs. 165 crores, out of which Rs. 85 crores have been dispensed with. What you are asking for the completely under a different scheme. It is a residential school scheme, in which the old scheme is continued, and new schemes are being looked into. It has nothing to do with this question.

DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: The 'b' part of your answer is ..*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, nothing more. Your supplementary question is over now. *(Interruptions)*Your supplementary question is over. *(Interruptions)*You did not frame your question properly.

श्री सतीश प्रधान: सभापति महोदय, शेड्यूल्ड कास्ट, शेड्यूल्ड ट्राइब्स और अन्य पिछड़े वर्गों की पढ़ाई के लिए मंत्री महोदया बहुत अच्छी मदद कर रही हैं। मैं यह जानना चाहूंगा कि समाज में शेड्यूल्ड कास्ट एवं शेड्यूल्ड ट्राइब्स के अलावा आर्थिक दृष्टि से जो दुर्बल घटक और भी हैं, क्या आप उनकी शिक्षा के लिए भी इसी ढंग से मदद करेंगी?

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Sir. I am afraid this question is not within the mandate of this Ministry The hon. Member would, perhaps, like to put this question to the Education Ministry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all.

श्री गांधी आज़ाद: सभापति महोदय, माननीय मंत्री जी ने प्रश्न के उत्तर में बताया है कि 1.10.95 से मेट्रिकोत्तर छात्रवृत्ति को संशोधित किया गया है लेकिन तब से महंगाई लगातार बढ़ती जा रही है। किताब, कॉपी और पढ़ाई की अन्य सामग्रियों के मूल्य लगातार बढ़ते जा रहे हैं। तो मैं माननीय मंत्री महोदया से जानना चाहता हूं कि क्या महंगाई के हिसाब से छात्रवृत्ति को पुनः संशोधित करने की कोई योजना है? अगर है तो उसका विवरण क्या है और अगर नहीं है तो क्यों नहीं?

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Sir, I agree with the hon. Member that the current scholarship which we are giving—if it is a residential-school, it is Rs. 490 a month; and if it is a day-school, it is about Rs. 100 a month—is completely inadequate. But, it will take some time for me to raise it. We are already looking into this to bring it at par with what they actually need.

SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY: Sir, even after 52 years of Independence, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes students have not

come up to the desired educational level. They are still facing financial crisis to complete their professional courses, like M.B.B.S. and various other courses in engineering colleges. Shri Gandhi Azad has put a very right question that before 1995, how much scholarship the Government of India has given, and after 1995, by how much it has been increased. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes students are facing a very acute financial problem. Now, I would like to know from the hon Minister whether the Government of India will give 100% scholarship to educate the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes students at all levels.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Sir, in 1994-95, Rs. 96 crores were released for 16,42,656 children. In 1995-96, this amount went up to Rs. 144 crores and the number of children covered was 17,00,090. If we take it to 1998-99, the amount of Central assistance was Rs. 100 crores for 21,38,932 children and in 1999-2000, it is Rs. 135 crores. I do not yet have the figures in respect of this year regarding the number of children covered under this scheme, which I will only get at the end of this year.

SHRI S. NIRAIKULATHAN: Sir, it is said that the rate of scholarship was last revised on 1st October, 1995. This means, for the last 4 years, the rate of scholarship for SC/ST students has not been revised in spite of the fact that the prices of books, stationery, mess fees, etc. are steadily increasing. The SC/ST students are not able to pay it. Therefore, Sir, part (a) of my question is: Will the Minister consider revising the rate of scholarship once a year to take care of the escalation in price? Sir, part (b) of my question is: Will the Minister assure the House that all the SC/ST students who apply for the educational loans for higher studies are given these loans irrespective of the number of applications received for the same?

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Sir, I have already answered part (1) that the money given to the students for their scholarships need to be increased. And, I said that while I agree that they should be increased, we would finalise the exact increase quite soon.

Secondly, about the amount of loans, well, no loan is really given by me. We do not have any loan schemes for students for their study. I think that is a State subject. There is no limit for giving total scholarship to the applicants.

SHRI S. NIRAIKULATHAN: All the students are not getting it.

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: That really depends on what the States ask us to do. We do not identify the students ourselves, nor do they write to us directly. If the Tamil Nadu State Government says that it has this much money and that it is spending this much, we give it 100 per cent on top of what they spend. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all right. Now please sit down.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI: As price-rise is a permanent features, will the Government think of linking the rise in the scholarship to the price index, as is done in the case of Government employees?

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: While linking it to the price index seems to be a wonderful thing to do in theory, it is not possible for us to give such an assurance for the simple reason that it will depend on whether the States are interested in linking it to the price index. If they link it up, we give them 100 per cent on top of that. So, they have to take the decision first. They may not want to do that.

SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Sir, I want to know the schemes sponsored by the Government of India. We receive a lot of complaints about not making the payment in time and the payment not being made in full. So, I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government have set up any monitoring system to look into these complaints. If yes, what are those?

SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI: Sir, as far as I know, we have 73 different schemes. I have made out a book for every Member of Parliament so that we can look at the schemes that we have and the amount given.

Secondly, yes, it is quite true that sometimes disbursements are not made in time. But this usually happens because the States do not send us their demands. From the North-East so far we have received no demand for allocation. To the States, which send them to us quickly, we reply very quickly and we give the money very quickly. Out of Rs. 135 crores, so far we have disbursed Rs. 83 crores, which was given as soon as we received the demands. However, in this Conference that took place, a lot of Members of Parliament said that the thing should be given quarterly, instead of giving it yearly. I think

that this is a legitimate demand. Let us see how we can work it out. *(Interruptions)*

*304. [The Questioner (Shri JANARDAN YADAV) was absent. For answer, vide page .....infra.]

Implementation of Durgah Khwaja Sahib Act

†*305. SHRI ONKAR SINGH LAKHAWAT: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken by Government for the effective implementation of Durgah Khwaja Sahib Act, alongwith the details thereof; and

(b) the details of amount spent on permanent and temporary arrangements in the last five years by Durgah Committee, Ajmer to provide facilities for pilgrims?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) In order to effectively implement the Durgah Khwaja Sahib Act, the Government appoints the Durgah Committee which manages the affairs of the Durgah and its endowments. The Central Government keeps a close watch on the activities of the Durgah by calling for information/report and reviewing the activities of the Committee from time to time.

(b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.